



MARKETING RABBITS

How do I get started?

MOST COMMON BREEDS OF RABBIT USED FOR MEAT

Breeds Classified as Commercial by ARBA are built for Market



○ Most Commonly used for market rabbits:

- **American Rabbit** (Max weight: 12 pounds)
- **American Chinchilla** (Max weight: 12 pounds)
- **Beveren Rabbits** (Max weight: 12 pounds)
- **Californian** (Max weight: 10 1/2 pounds)
- **Champagne d'Argent** (Max weight: 12 pounds)
- **Cinnamon** (Max weight: 11 pounds)
- **Crème d'Argent** (Max weight: 11 pounds)
- **New Zealand** (Max weight: 12 pounds)
- **Palomino** (Max weight: 11 pounds)
- **Satin** (Max weight: 11 pounds)
- **Silver Fox** (Max weight: 12 pounds)



WHEN TO BREED YOUR RABBIT FOR MARKET (FAIR AUCTION)

Gestational time: ~30 days

At least 3 months old but under 6 months

Breed no earlier than December 18th

Ideally Breed in Late January or February

Breed no later than March 15th

Average weight: 5lbs by 10 weeks



CARING FOR YOUR MARKET RABBIT

- Antibiotics may be given to prevent or treat diseases in rabbits. A "withdrawal" period is required from the time antibiotics are administered until it is legal to slaughter the animal. This allows time for residues to exit the animal's system.
 - Verify Withdrawal Period with the Prescribing Veterinarian
- No hormones may be used in rabbit raising for meat consumption.
- Pet and Meat Rabbits require the same basics: Cleanliness, Food, Water, Shelter, and Space



FEEDING AND RATE OF GAIN

Weight Requirements:

Fryers: 1.5 to 3.5 pounds

****Roasters: 5.5 to 9 pounds**

Age:

Fryers: Under 3 Months

****Roasters: 3 to 6 months**

Food per pound of weight increase:

Rabbit kits gain a pound for every 3 pounds of feed consumed.

Studies have shown that the doe and her litter together to eat 3.5 - 4 pounds of feed per pound of the litter's weight gain, up until market day. (Based on New Zealand Breed weight gain rate)



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW FOR FAIR CHECK-IN AND SHOW

- YQCA Certification MUST be complete to show animals.
- Rabbits must be in your possession by May 15th.
- Fair Entries are due by May 30 @4:30 P.M.
- Rabbits will all be checked in prior to weigh in time 12:30 to 4 P.M.
- There will not be swapping of rabbits after check-in.
- Weigh in Starts at 4 P.M. on Tuesday.
- Show is at 3 P.M Thursday.
- Watch for the Show order to be posted.
- Dress Code is in effect for exhibitors and Substitutes.
- If you need a substitute during the show (2 rabbits judging at the same time), the substitute should be a 4-H youth.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW FOR FAIR AUCTION

- May 30: Auction Entry Forms Due @4:30 P.M.
- May 31: Fair Sign up – Must enter in the Market Lot for Auction
- June 23: Auction Buyer Cards Due @4:30 P.M.
 - Some People you can ask:
 - 4-H leaders
 - Adult Friends and Family
 - Local Business Owners
- July 23: Fur and Feather Auction @ 10:00 A.M.
 - Line up start at 9:45 A.M. Be in the sale barn area. DO NOT BE LATE.
 - Order of Sale will be posted before the Sale begins.
 - Dress Appropriately (Read the dress code)
 - Smile and keep your eyes up
 - Thank your Buyers
 - Offer to pass out water before or after the Rabbit portion is complete.
- October 2: Auction Financial Records Due @ 4:30 P.M.

All forms and information can be found at:

<https://green.extension.wisc.edu/4-h-youth-development/livestock-auctions/>

PROCESSING AND DELIVERY

Local processors:

- Riechers Meat Processing:
 - 103 W Center St, South Wayne WI 53587. 608-439-5339
 - \$5 per Rabbit
- Local Amish Farms:
 - Contact in person for information
 - \$5-15 per Rabbit

Processing timeline:

- Fair Auction Rabbits must be Dressed and Delivered by October 1st.

MEAT STORAGE

Storage:

- Refrigerate:
 - 40 °F or below.
 - Use it within 2 days
- Freeze:
 - 0 °F or below.
 - If kept frozen continuously, it will be safe indefinitely; however, quality will diminish over time. It is safe to freeze rabbit in its original packaging. For prolonged storage, overwrap as you would any food for long-term storage. For best quality, use frozen whole rabbit within a year; pieces within 9 months.

SAFE THAWING

- **Refrigerator:** It's best to plan for slow, safe thawing in the refrigerator. Bone-in parts or whole rabbits may take a day or longer to thaw. Once thawed, rabbit may be stored in the refrigerator for 2 days before cooking. During this time, if you decide not to use the rabbit, you can safely refreeze it without cooking it.
- **Cold Water:** To defrost rabbit in cold water, do not remove the packaging. Be sure the package is airtight or put it into a leak-proof bag. Submerge the rabbit in cold water, changing the water every 30 minutes so that it continues to thaw. Small packages may defrost in an hour or less; larger packages may take 2 to 3 hours. Plan to cook the rabbit immediately after thawing by the cold water method.
- **Microwave oven:** When defrosting rabbit in the microwave oven, plan to cook it immediately after thawing because some of the areas of the food may become warm and begin to cook.

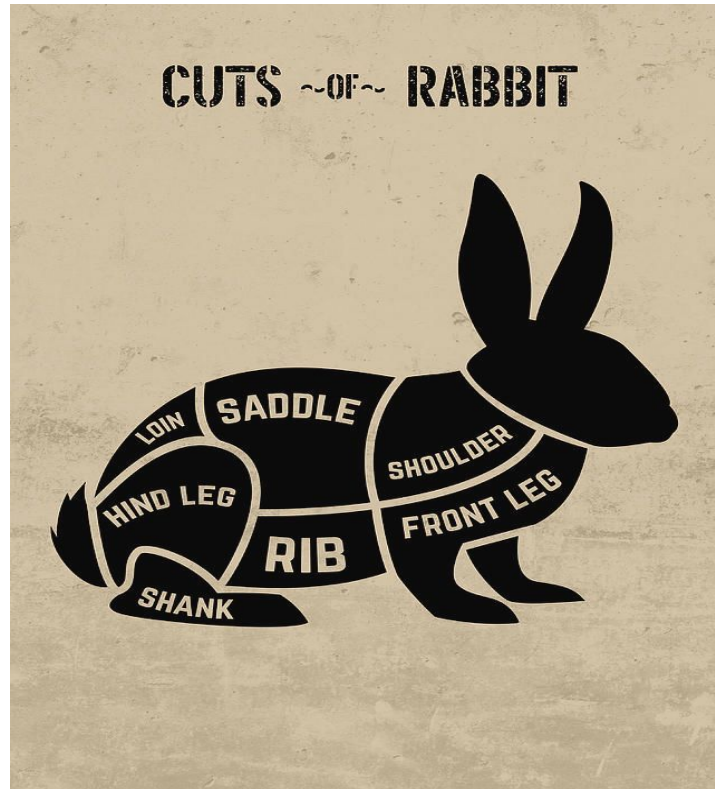
DOES RABBIT NEED TO BE INSPECTED FOR FOOD GRADING?

Per the USDA FMIA (Federal Meat Inspection Act) and PPIA (Poultry Products Inspection Act):

FSIS (Federal Safety and Inspection Service) inspects "domesticated poultry" which is defined as chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese, guineas, ratites, and squab.

Congress has not mandated inspection of rabbits under either the FMIA or the PPIA; therefore, inspection of rabbit is voluntary. Voluntary inspection of animals, including buffalo, antelope, reindeer, elk, deer, migratory water fowl, game birds, and rabbit, is handled under the Agricultural Marketing Act. Under voluntary inspection, each rabbit and its internal organs are inspected for signs of disease. The "Inspected for Wholesomeness by USDA" mark of inspection ensures the rabbit is wholesome and free from disease. When a rabbit processor does not produce rabbit meat under FSIS voluntary inspection, they would be subject to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) inspection under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act.

CUTS OF RABBIT



WHY CONSUME RABBIT MEAT?

- ~150-200 calories per serving
- 25% of daily intake
 - Protein = Build and repair muscles and skin
 - Iron = Blood health
 - B Vitamins = Energy
 - Niacin = Energy
- 14% of Daily Intake
 - Omega-3
- 4% of Daily intake
 - Fat - Heart Healthy Diet

HOW CAN RABBIT MEAT BE USED?

- Human consumption
 - Can be used in place of chicken or fish in recipes
- Pet food
 - Good for Dogs and Cats as ground fresh meat.

COMMON RABBIT PREPARATIONS

- Rabbit Sausage
- Rabbit Stews
- Roasted Rabbit
- Rabbit Casserole
- Rabbit Curry
- Fried Rabbit
- Grilled Rabbit
- Smoked Rabbit
- Braised Rabbit



As Seen on MasterChef



Q & A

RESOURCES:

- <https://green.extension.wisc.edu/4-h-youth-development/livestock-auctions/>
- <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/food-safety/safe-food-handling-and-preparation/meat/rabbit-farm-table>
- <https://www.raising-rabbits.com/meat-rabbits.html>
- <https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/services/nutritional-food-fact-sheet-series/rabbit-and-hare>
- ARBA.net